

# ***The Studio*: Photomechanical Reproduction and the Changing Status of Design**

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Footnotes begin on page 59.

The 1890s marked the beginning of a new era in visual representation. It was during this decade that photographic images were first successfully incorporated alongside written texts in illustrated weekly and monthly magazines. Photo relief reproduction processes, which had been developed over the previous decades, were refined to a level where they became commercially viable and culturally acceptable. Line methods had been in use since the 1870s. They produced an image which was fixed onto a sensitized metal plate, and etched to produce a type-compatible relief block. The halftone techniques first developed in the 1880s transformed the continuous tones of an original into tiny dots, which then were etched in much the same way as photo relief line methods. Halftone techniques could duplicate photographs, paintings, and wash images, while line methods were widely used for the printing of pen and ink drawings. Collectively, these photographic approaches were known as “process.” These techniques were able to challenge the existing reproduction technology of wood engraving, which had dominated the illustrated press up to this point. This essay looks at one particular aspect of this shift in the mass-produced image: the depiction of art and design. It examines *The Studio*, a monthly art magazine which was launched in London in April 1893, and which used only photomechanical methods to visualize an extended range of artistic practice. I examine the meanings and effects of the reproduction processes as they relate to the status of design.

Clive Ashwin has suggested: “*The Studio* was the first visually modern magazine to the extent that it adopted the reproductive medium which would dominate art publishing, indeed publishing in general, for the century to come.”<sup>1</sup> Certainly, around this time, a number of English magazines were applying this new imaging technology. *The Sketch*, the first middle-class, photographically reproduced weekly was launched in February of 1893, just before *The Studio*. By the early-1890s, most magazines, including the specialist art monthlies, were using a mixture of reproduction methods including wood engravings and photographic halftones. So why did *The Studio* switch entirely to this new method? I will examine the early days of the magazine in some detail to analyze the significance of its image reproduction decisions.<sup>2</sup>

Although Walter Benjamin famously suggested that the increased circulation of images of art resulted in the weakening or removal of the aura of the original, an examination of the art publications of this era reveals a complex situation in which reproduced images actually added to the allure of the real thing. The widespread diffusion of inexpensive mass reproductions was an element in the creation of a mystique around original paintings or sculptures, objects which often had not been visible at all up to this point. In addition, I would argue that the change in reproduction methods itself served to heighten the standing of the original. The wood engraving retained a status and a function independent of the original: it was clearly a translation into another medium—a medium with its own, long-established symbolic language. The halftone, on the other hand, was essentially a simplified, lesser, monochrome version of something superior, unaffordable, and apart.<sup>3</sup>

Yet, in the early days of *The Studio*, photomechanical reproduction operated in an egalitarian and inclusive manner since the fine and applied arts, both high and low, were reproduced in an identical way. In other art magazines, status was inscribed within the printed image by the reproduction method that was used. The more important the artwork, the more elaborate the reproduction techniques which were employed to produce a printable matrix. *The Studio*, on the other hand, treated all forms of art in the same way: a sculpture, a painting, a chair, a tapestry, a photograph, or a bungalow would be shown in an identical manner. This radical approach was associated with the magazine's founding editor, Joseph Gleeson White, who was one of the major figures in the discourse around decorative art and reproduction in the 1890s.

Early in 1893, Gleeson White was approached by his friend, Lewis Hind, regarding a new monthly magazine that intended to take an innovative approach to the depiction of art. The periodical would provide international coverage of contemporary developments in modern art and design, and it would do so using only photographic reproduction methods. Hind's project was being financed by Charles Holme, a wealthy businessman. Holme, having made a fortune in the textile trade, had retired at the age of forty-four to promote the new movement in design. Hind already had begun to commission articles when he was poached by Lord Astor to oversee his revamped process illustrated weekly, the *Pall Mall Budget*. Hind offered to find a replacement, and persuaded Gleeson White, an experienced writer and editor, to take over the job on short notice.<sup>4</sup>

The proposed magazine would be a radical, pioneering publication at variance with the conservative art world and established art periodicals. It intended to take a different approach from these existing monthlies in price, audience, content, and reproduction method. Although heavily illustrated, it was relatively inexpensive at sixpence per issue. Some of the established art monthlies cost three times that amount. Its price brought it within the reach of a younger

readership, an audience not of connoisseurs and collectors, but of practitioners, students, and middle-class enthusiasts. *The Studio's* intention was to visualize a wide spectrum of artistic practice. Its title referred not only to the painter's studio, but to the studio of the textile designer, the poster designer, the illustrator, the potter, the furniture maker, the architect, and the photographer. The magazine was intent on establishing art as a modern, everyday activity in which its readers could participate. Rather than dealing with the art of the past, it would show the work of its own time and deal with contemporary concerns. It also proposed to highlight younger artists, who might not yet have established a reputation. From the beginning, it was international in its scope: its aim was to spread awareness of developments in the English decorative arts through Europe and North America. To this end, *The Studio* printed an American edition as well as a bilingual French version.<sup>5</sup>

Established art magazines such as the *Art Journal* and *The Magazine of Art* catered to an affluent, upper-middle-class readership. They were expensive and conservative in their content, and featured much academic and historical art. By the early nineties, the mainstream magazines had adopted photo relief halftone technologies, but these were positioned at the lowest level of the hierarchy of reproductive techniques deployed within their pages. Halftones were used to depict paintings and sculpture, although mainly as small images documenting artworks within articles. These photographic images not only would have been cheap to replicate, but the "Old Masters" would have been copyright free.<sup>6</sup>

For its full-page images of paintings, *The Magazine of Art* often used highly finished wood engravings based on photographs. This approach to reproductive wood engraving had emerged through the American "New School" engravers who, from the 1880s, had produced increasingly fine tonal reproductions which captured the surface qualities of paintings in a pseudo-photographic manner. Photographs of paintings were fixed onto woodblocks and then painstakingly engraved using a small number of tools to produce an even tonal effect. As the "New School" aimed for mimesis rather than translation, why not simply use photo relief halftones to reproduce the originals? First of all, halftone processes were still unable to capture the subtleties of an original without considerable, expensive retouching. Second, and even more significant, the halftone image erased the handwork which still was an important element in the assignment of status to a printed image. The "New School" approach combined the factuality of photographic facsimile with the visible artistic labor of the engraver.<sup>7</sup>

In *The Magazine of Art*, the "New School" style reproductive prints were credited to their engravers. These wood engraved images were spatially separated from the editorial text. They occupied full pages rather than being placed within the text like the halftones. The fact that they were allocated an entire page was an indication of their

importance—these were freestanding objects framed by the white margins of the paper in a manner similar to a painting. However, they still were subordinate to the text and were used as examples of a particular artist's oeuvre. They also were linked to the editorial text by being printed on the same paper stock.

At the top of the image hierarchy in the art press were the etchings and photogravure inserts, which were on thicker stock than the rest of the magazine.<sup>8</sup> These images, unlike the wood engravings or halftones, were not printed at the same time as the letterpress text, but were run off separately and then bound in. In order to emphasize their value, these inserts often appeared on stock which had colors and finishes that did not match the rest of the journal. In *The Magazine of Art*, each insert's subject matter and artistic merits were discussed in an essay on the facing page. The halftones and wood engravings illuminated the texts they accompanied, while, in the case of the etched or photogravure inserts, the written texts were subservient to the images.

The old-fashioned wood engraving and the high-class reproductive etching, which were such a feature of art magazines, were to be excluded from *The Studio*. Its radical modernity and democratic intentions were asserted by its commitment to using only photo relief processes. This signaled that the art which appeared in *The Studio* was to be less precious and more accessible.<sup>9</sup> As a shrewd businessman, and an outsider to publishing, Charles Holme also would have appreciated the economic advantages of photographic reproduction. He could not have afforded to bind in etchings if he hoped to sell his magazine at sixpence a copy. Photomechanical techniques helped to keep the price of his new venture relatively low, while providing readers with large numbers of images. *The Studio* contained the same amount of illustration as the existing art monthlies, only it did so at a greatly reduced cost.<sup>10</sup>

Although he had not been Holme's first choice, Gleeson White proved to be the ideal editor for his new venture. Gleeson White originally had been a bookseller by trade, but he combined this with literary editing and freelance writing on the decorative and fine arts. A progressive cosmopolitan critic, Gleeson White had a broad knowledge of the contemporary art and design world. Not only had he written on art, crafts, and illustration, he also had a strong interest in photography. Moreover, unlike his fellow English journalists, he had editorial experience on an art magazine illustrated mainly by process. Many of the innovations that appeared in *The Studio* had been anticipated by *The Art Amateur*, an American magazine on which Gleeson White had worked in 1890. *The Art Amateur* was a large-format, heavily illustrated popular magazine of decorative and fine arts. It used modern techniques of image reproduction with many line and halftone illustrations and large, lithographic supplements. Gleeson White moved to New York to work as its associate editor, and although his stay in the United States turned



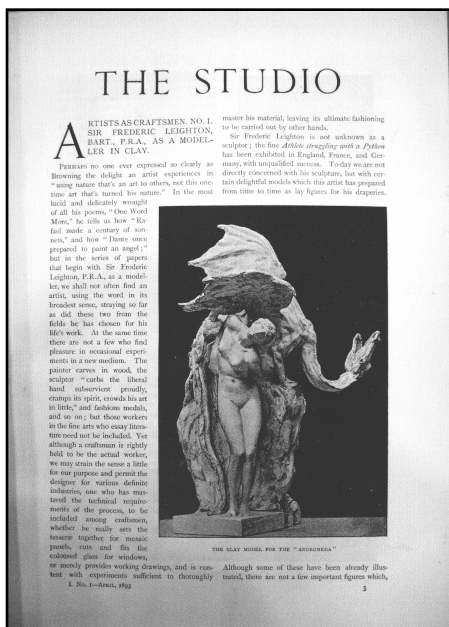
out to be short-lived, he gained invaluable editorial experience on a magazine which illustrated the spectrum of arts in an accessible and contemporary fashion.<sup>11</sup>

In 1892 after returning to England, Gleeson White engaged in the energetic promotion of modern illustration and decorative arts. His main employment was as art editor of George Bell and Sons. Here he wrote, commissioned, and designed many important books on illustration and reproduction. His "Ex Libris Series" on the art of the book included both Joseph Pennell's *Modern Illustration* (1895) and Walter Crane's *The Decorative Illustration of Books* (1896). Other titles in the series included books on bookplates, printer's marks, and bindings. Bell was highly regarded as an art publisher. In 1895, for instance, *The Art Journal's* annual review of notable books on art and design concentrated almost entirely on works by George Bell.<sup>12</sup> Gleeson White also continued his freelance journalism, writing on photography in *The Photogram* and interviewing illustrators in *The Idler*.<sup>13</sup> He was deeply involved in issues of reproduction; he attend the meetings of the Royal Photographic Society's process section, and sent his son to study printing and process.<sup>14</sup>

*The Studio's* launch issue in April 1893 under Sir Gleeson White's direction was a dramatic demonstration of the possibilities of photographic reproduction. Within its forty pages were forty-seven illustrations in line and halftone. The two major articles dealt with Frederick Leighton's sculptures and Aubrey Beardsley's pen and ink drawings, both of which were ideal subjects for demonstrating what modern imaging processes could achieve. The Leighton article was illustrated by halftone photographs, while the Beardsley article used line processes.

Figure 1

"The Artist as Craftsman" The opening page of *The Studio's* launch issue with an article on Sir Frederic Leighton. *The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 3.



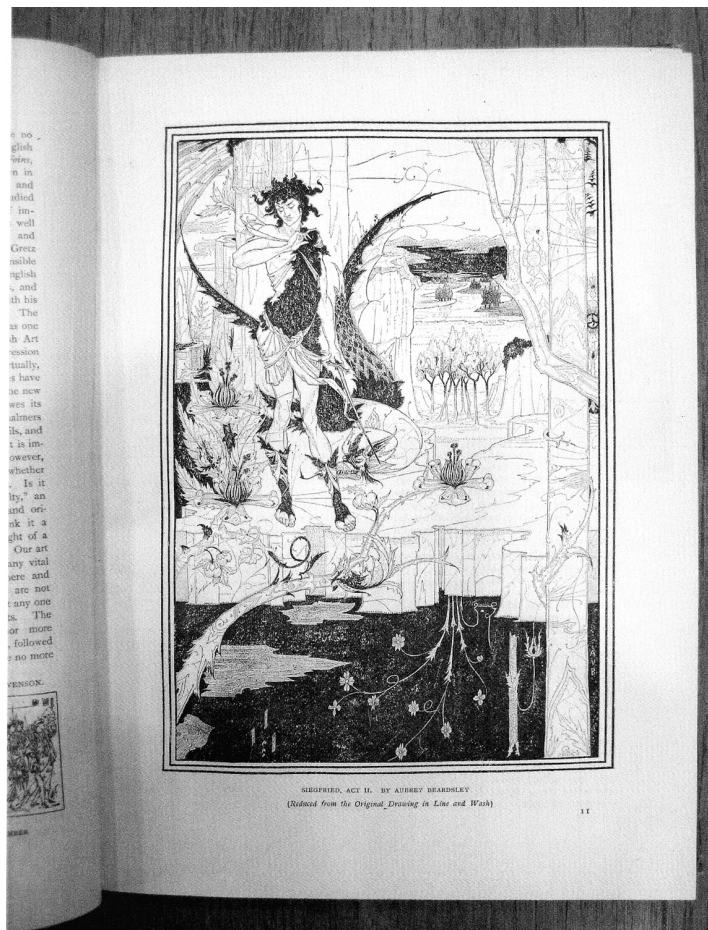
The opening article started at the apex of the art establishment by way of an interview with Leighton, the president of the Royal Academy.<sup>15</sup> The piece was illustrated by nine large, retouched halftone photographs of his clay maquettes.<sup>16</sup> By launching its premiere issue with an interview, the epitome of new journalism, *The Studio* made its modern editorial stance clear. The conversation with Leighton begins: "You are early," were his first words. "I have so many engagements I am compelled to keep punctually to the exact time."<sup>17</sup> The magazine's interviews with artists in their studios emphasized the specific circumstances of the encounter between the interviewer and the subject. This was typical of the press interviews of the day, which included a great deal of information on the site in which the encounter between the subject and the reporter took place. This approach was particularly appropriate for a magazine of decorative art in which there was a strong sense that the individual and his or her surroundings were one.<sup>18</sup>

After the photographs of Leighton's sculptures, the next images the reader encountered were two Beardsley line drawings. This marked a dramatic transition from the most respected academic artist of the day to a totally unknown young illustrator. *The Studio* was demonstrating both its intention to spotlight emerging artists, as well as its commitment to a broad spectrum of art practice. At the foot of page ten was a one-and-a-half by six-inch Beardsley drawing of Joan of Arc. It formed the end piece to an article entitled "The Growth of Recent Art," which defended contemporary art against charges of eccentricity, decadence, and morbidity, the very accusations that soon would be leveled at Beardsley. The caption to the Joan of Arc illustration promised that a large seven inch by thirty inch lithographic reproduction would be included as a supplement in a later issue. This image demonstrated the ability of process to produce images in many sizes, and also underlined the magazine's commitment to the young Beardsley. The few supplements which appeared in the early years of *The Studio* often were lithographs, a process which had been associated up to this point with the commercial poster, but which was being established as a medium of artistic expression.<sup>19</sup>

Facing the Joan of Arc drawing on the recto page was a full-page image captioned "Siegfried, Act II. By Aubrey Beardsley (Reduced from the Original Drawing in Line and Wash.)" The caption underlined again the ability of photography to change the scale of images. Although there was a huge gulf in experience and reputation between Beardsley and Leighton, in terms of subject matter, these images were rather harmonious. Beardsley's *Siegfried* echoed the earlier images of Leighton's draped or naked mythological figures, particularly the *Andromeda* on page three, who also was shown with a winged dragon.<sup>20</sup> These images were just a foretaste, since they were followed not by the article on Beardsley but by a piece on sketching in Spain illustrated by Frank Brangwyn's tonal

Figure 2

"Siegfried, Act II. By Aubrey Beardsley"  
The Studio 1:1 (1893): 11.



wash illustrations.<sup>21</sup> It was common in *The Studio* for illustrations to overlap into adjoining articles. Image and text were not always in step. Another Beardsley pen drawing *A Frieze from Malory's Morte d'Arthur* was dropped in at the foot of page thirty-three, in the middle of an article on the newly reopened Grafton Gallery. In all, the novice illustrator had thoroughly infiltrated the launch issue. Including the cover design, there was a total of nine of his images in *The Studio*, five of which were full-page.

The Beardsley article was evidence of *The Studio's* commitment not only to new talent, but also to its new imaging processes. Both visually and textually, the article was a powerful demonstration of photomechanical reproduction. By removing the interpretive hand of the engraver, the photographic processes emphasized the artist's individual vision in a more intense way. The early years of the decade saw an explosion of pen and ink illustration reproduced by photo relief line techniques, from the realist social cartoons of Phil May to Beardsley's decorative fantasies. Before his departure, Lewis Hind already had commissioned Joseph Pennell, "the most vocal of critics," to write the piece on Beardsley.<sup>22</sup> Pennell, an acerbic American illustrator, was the acknowledged expert on pen and ink

drawing, and a fervent supporter of photomechanical methods. The article he created was as much to do with process reproduction as it was with Beardsley. In fact, the essay was rather noncommittal on Beardsley's talent and his potential as an artist. Although Pennell often was credited with discovering Beardsley, he saw him as a young man very much at the beginning of his career, and he was unsure of Beardsley's future prospects or direction. In his three, short columns of text, he said surprisingly little about the illustrator himself, and made only a brief, surface analysis of his work. As Haldane Macfall, the art critic of *St. Paul's* and a friend of Beardsley's noted: "Pennell was writing for a new magazine of arts and crafts: and his fierce championship of process reproduction was as much part of his aim as Beardsley's art—and all of us who have been saved from the vile debauching of our line work by the average wood engraver owe it largely to Pennell that process reproduction won through—and not least of all to Beardsley."<sup>23</sup> As Macfall's comments make clear, the eventual success of process was a struggle, not a foregone conclusion, and the opinion of critics was necessary in the promotion of this new technology.

Pennell's article "A New Illustrator: Aubrey Beardsley" begins in the second column of page fourteen with a huge initial letter "I" drawn by Beardsley. Pennell launched his text: "I have lately seen a few drawings which seem to me to be very remarkable." The piece makes it clear that the drawings were as remarkable for their method of reproduction as for their content. He went on to say:

It is most interesting to note, too, that though Mr. Beardsley has drawn his motives from every age, and found his styles—for it is quite impossible to say what his style may be—on all schools, he has not been carried back into the fifteenth century, or succumbed to the limitations of Japan; he has recognized that he is living in the last decade of the nineteenth century, and he has availed himself of mechanical reproduction for the publication of his drawings which the Japs and the Germans would have accepted with delight had they but known it. The reproduction of the *Morte d'Arthur* drawing, printed in this number, is one of the most marvelous pieces of mechanical engraving, if not the most marvelous, that I have ever seen, simply for this reason: it gives Mr. Beardsley's actual handiwork, and not the interpretation of it by someone else. I know it is the correct thing to rave over the velvety, fatty quality of the wood-engraved line, a quality which can be obtained from any process block by careful printing, and which is not due to the artist at all. But here I find the distinct qualities of a pen line, and of Mr. Beardsley's pen line, which had been used by the artist and reproduced by the process-man in a truly extraordinary manner.<sup>24</sup>

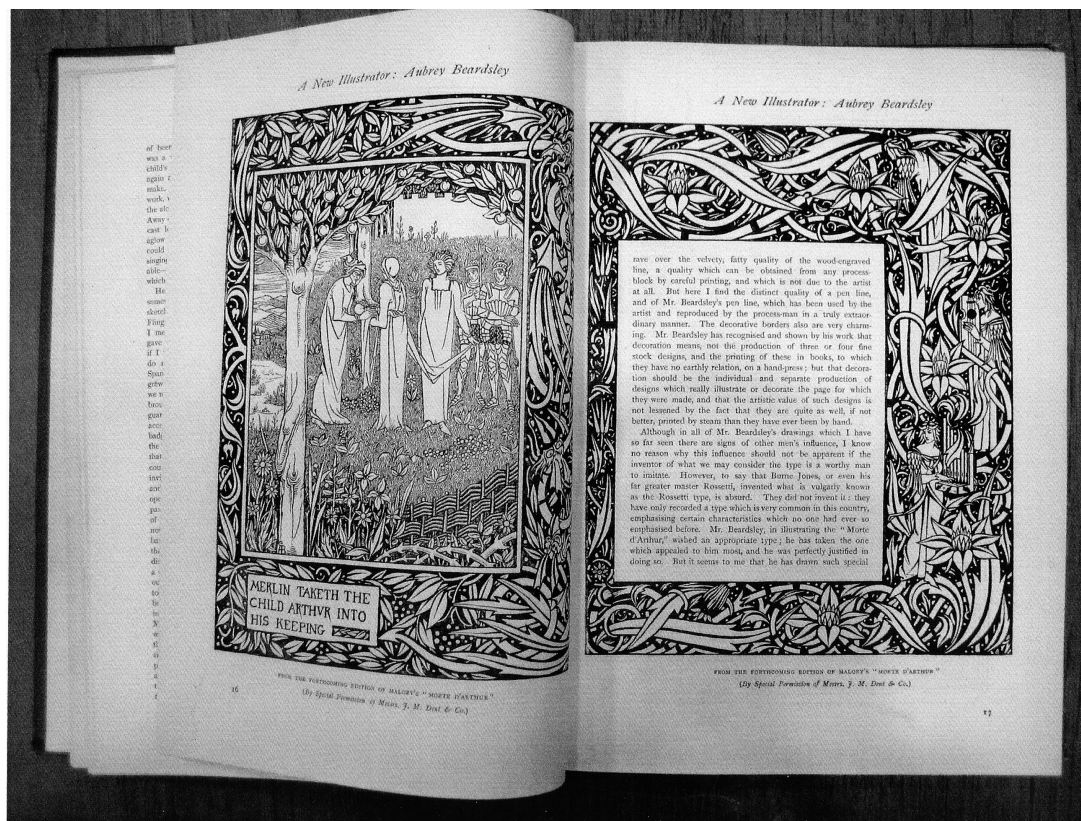


Figure 3  
Page spread with Pennell's article inserted  
within Beardsley's illustration. "From the  
Forthcoming Edition of Malory's *Morte  
d'Arthur*," *The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 16–17.

For Pennell, the *Morte D'Arthur* image proved that process could match the visual richness of wood engraving. Pennell's argument was particularly compelling because this section of his text was inserted within Beardsley's borders. As he wrote of the "velvety, fatty" line, his words were encircled by just such lines, reinforcing his point that these effects were possible with process. In fact, Beardsley's *Morte D'Arthur* designs were ersatz wood engravings. The book was a cheap photo line relief imitation of William Morris's hand-engraved and hand-printed Kelmscott Press books.<sup>25</sup> In the mid-nineties, there was a dramatic proliferation of books such as *Morte D'Arthur* which were inspired by the Kelmscott style, but which were reproduced by line process and printed on simulated handmade paper on mechanized presses. Their illustrations appeared to be wood engravings, but were pen and ink drawings in the style of woodcuts reproduced by much cheaper photographic methods.<sup>26</sup>

Not only could process match the richness of wood engraving as Pennell noted, what was crucial for him was that it could directly convey the artist's "actual handiwork." Beardsley was an ideal example of this claim. The images demonstrated that he was working with a number of styles. The "distinct qualities" of his pen line varied considerably from image to image in the illustrations that



Figure 4  
 "J'ai baisé ta bouche Iokanaan" (detail),  
*The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 15.

*The Studio* printed. In fact, this eclecticism is what was distinctive about Beardsley. His appropriation of styles was, paradoxically, an indication of the individuality of the person choosing and combining these various disparate approaches. The *Morte D'Arthur* image showed him using Burne-Jones's mock medieval tropes, but in "J'ai baisé ta bouche Iokanaan" Beardsley already was experimenting with the stylistic mixture that would become known as "art nouveau." Photographic reproduction allowed image makers this hybrid freedom to mix and quote from other styles and other periods for the first time. Indeed, with its emphasis on the authorial hand, the move to process reproduction heightened an awareness of style. The individual was free to produce highly personal "grotesque" or "eccentric" work that ignored the principles of the Academy and the conventions imposed by wood engraving. Beardsley's work, which was constantly in flux, created an awareness that style is a choice and a construction.

The images in *The Studio* demonstrate Beardsley's move from using process to imitate wood engraving to his staking out a new territory for this technique, a new photomechanical aesthetic. The sinuous line that Beardsley used in his illustration for Wilde's *Salome*, which became typical of art nouveau, would not have been possible in wood engraving, or at least would not have been think-

able. Process gave Beardsley the freedom to extend his line in length and contract it in width to a degree that wood engraving would not have encouraged.

Pennell's article ended on a typically aesthetic elitist note, although it may have been an appropriate remark, given *The Studio's* intention of appealing to an artistic readership: "Certainly, with the comparatively small amount of work which Mr. Beardsley has produced, he has managed to appeal to artists—and what more could he wish."<sup>27</sup> The article launched the young illustrator's career. *The Studio* claimed that Beardsley was known in Paris two weeks after the publication of its first issue, and that this was the most rapid international fame of any English artist. Paul Greenhalgh sees the publication of "J'ai baisé ta bouche Iokanaan" as the first seminal moment in the art nouveau movement, and notes its rapid international diffusion. Will Bradley, a young illustrator in Chicago, saw Beardsley's work in *The Studio* and immediately was inspired to take a new direction in his own illustration. With process reproduction, illustrators were able to see the work of their peers very quickly and directly. In the case of paintings, halftones were unable to convey the colors, scale, or subtleties of the distant and inaccessible original. But the pen and ink drawing was made with the intention that it would be mass-produced in books or magazines; the printed images were not lesser objects, but final pieces.<sup>28</sup>

From the first issues, *The Studio's* readership was assured of the suitability of process as a means of reproduction by regular comments on the subject. Articles, book reviews, and editorials all dealt with the replication and printing of imagery.<sup>29</sup> Almost all of these texts supported photomechanical reproduction as an accurate and modern imaging method, and characterized wood engraving as old-fashioned and intrusive. Wood engraving's true role was now as a medium of artistic expression, as in the wood cuts of Lucien Pissaro.<sup>30</sup> In the second issue of *The Studio*, Gleeson White insisted that process reproduction was the only truthful way of showing artistic photographs. In an interview with H. H. Hay Cameron, the photographer son of Julia Margaret Cameron, Gleeson White requested some photographs for reproduction. "May I take some of them to show (in the paraphrase which photo-engraving alone offers) to the readers of *The Studio*, a proof that the praise I mean to set down is based on solid facts?"<sup>31</sup>

*The Studio* continued to feature reproduction and illustration extensively as part of its reporting on the decorative arts. The magazine included pen and ink process illustration as one of a range of modern image-making and image-reproduction practices which included photography, etching, poster illustration, and lithography. The common thread in this coverage was the individuality that the imagemakers brought to their task. In *The Studio's* discourse on

artistic value, the defining quality assigned to the artist/designer and his or her products was that of uniqueness. Speaking of the French poster designer Théophile Steinlen, Gleeson White asserted that "... in art, especially in design, personality and individual feeling are the chief things."<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, this personal quality was an innate aspect of the artist and designer himself or herself, rather than being something that could be instilled through education.<sup>33</sup> Photomechanical reproduction was praised for its ability to directly communicate these distinctive personal characteristics.

With the success of *The Studio*, other art magazines attempted to follow its lead, both in terms of content and reproduction techniques. However, any claims to modernity that these other magazines made were compromised in a number of ways. By 1896, the fine reproductive wood engravings which had been common in *The Art Journal* disappeared, and their place was taken by large, retouched, photographic halftones. However, the editorial support for new artistic developments was undermined by the highly conventional and sentimental nature of the majority of these photomechanical images.<sup>34</sup> *The Magazine of Art* continued to employ a reproductive hierarchy so that a range of techniques including halftones, etching, and wood engraving might all be used within the same article.<sup>35</sup> The various images that the publication printed using these different methods remained maudlin and trite.

Meanwhile, *The Studio* itself was changing and, ironically, becoming more like these conventional magazines. Fine art took an ever more prominent place in its pages. In its first volumes, the magazine reproduced halftones of three-dimensional pieces in preference to paintings. When it did feature two-dimensional work, rather than showing chromatic paintings, it preferred line images and pen and ink sketches or objects such as tapestries which had strong surface patterns. Volumes one to three covering 1893 and 1894 contained only a handful of paintings.<sup>36</sup> However, in 1895, a total of ninety-five appeared. By 1896, the fine arts had become the most visible element in the magazine. This change could be explained by the increasing sophistication of halftone techniques as finer screens produced images with sharper contrast. But this presumes that only technical considerations governed the content of the first years and, I believe, there are other explanations for the change.

Gleeson White stepped down as editor in 1895 to pursue his other publishing ventures, and Holme took over as both editor and publisher.<sup>37</sup> Although Gleeson White continued to contribute important articles to *The Studio* up to his sudden death in October 1898, he was no longer in charge. The subjects that he was particularly interested in promoting: black and white illustration, reproduction, and photography became less prominent. They continued to be covered, but with a much less-intense focus than in the first few



years. Between 1893 and 1901, *The Studio* printed approximately 850 paintings, 60 posters, 144 illustrations, and approximately 90 photographs. Most of the photographs and the articles on photography appeared in the first five volumes, when Gleeson White was still exerting editorial influence.

As *The Studio's* content subtly changed, so did the format through which it was expressed. Each issue now opened with an extended article on an artist, illustrated by large halftones of his or her work and occasionally by photographs of the artist in his or her studio.<sup>38</sup> The vast majority of *The Studio's* articles were now on artists rather than designers. The magazine also became more conventional in that it established an imaging hierarchy. It did not change its reproduction methods, but photographically reproduced inserts of prints or sketches became a regular feature in the magazine. As in the established magazines, these were printed on thicker paper stock and blind-embossed to enhance their status and make them look like handmade autographic prints.

During his tenure, Gleeson White had promoted modern illustration not just as a valid art form, but as the most vibrant of the contemporary arts. His "Lay Figure" columns form a sustained argument for poster, book, magazine, and newspaper illustrations as the equals of painting. In a piece from "The Editor's Room" in 1895, the writer, most probably White, argued: "To those whose art domain is bounded by picture galleries and *éditions de luxe*, the mere mention of posters, daily newspapers, and current periodicals as new regions wherein it lurks, comes as almost treasonable laxity."<sup>39</sup> Gleeson White tried to open up new areas of design practice as valid domains for the collector. Indeed, poster collecting did become a rage in the 1890s with exhibitions, books, magazines, and dealers all devoted to preserving these ephemeral advertisements. *The Studio's* launch issue contained one of the first important articles on the subject: Charles Hiatt's "The Collecting of Posters: A New Field for Connoisseurs."<sup>40</sup> However, there was clearly no commercial value in the collecting of contemporary newspapers and magazines. Decorative art, particularly furniture and other domestic and personal objects, for which there was an established market, retained an important place in the magazine. However, despite *The Studio's* achievement in carving out a space for design, the superior position of fine art was, within a few years, reasserted through the editorial structures of the magazine itself. Indeed, the publication of halftones of paintings in magazines became a crucial aspect in the marketing of artists and their works. In contrast, Joseph Gleeson White's hope that process reproduction might make the everyday and the ephemeral worthy of equal consideration as art did not prevail.

- 1 Clive Ashwin, "The Founding of *The Studio* in High Life and Low Life: The Studio and the Fin de Siècle," *Studio International* Special Centenary Number 201.1022/1023 (1993): 5–10, quotation 8.
- 2 On *The Sketch* and for more details on photomechanical reproduction, see Gerry Beegan, "The Up-to-Date Periodical: Subjectivity, Technology, and Time in the Late-Victorian Press," *Time and Society* 10 (2001): 113–134.
- 3 James Parton, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1869, suggested that reproduction would enhance the value of the original. See Mary Warner Marien, *Photography and its Critics: A Cultural History 1839–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 178. Walter Benjamin's ideas about mechanical reproduction and the death of the artistic aura have been questioned by many commentators. See Jaquelynn Baas, "Reconsidering Walter Benjamin: The Age of Mechanical Reproduction in Retrospect" in G. P. Weisberg, *The Documented Image: Visions in Art History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 339–340. Elizabeth McCauley argues that the copy adds to the aura of the original in a cult of celebrity in *Industrial Madness: Commercial Photography in Paris 1848–1871* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994).
- 4 Hind was the editor of *Pall Mall Budget* for three years, during which time he employed Beardsley as an illustrator. See Haldane Macfall, *Aubrey Beardsley: The Man and His Work* (London: John Lane, 1928). Some of the Beardsley's drawings appeared in *The Pall Mall Budget* before *The Studio*'s profile. They had little impact.
- 5 The French edition featured an insert, which translated the text. Clive Ashwin suggests: "For *The Studio*, the central purpose of art was to make life more comfortable, convenient, and pleasant; not to challenge assumptions about the nature of experience or the facts of perception." Clive Ashwin, "The Studio and Modernism," *Studio International* 193 (1976): 103–112, quote 104. I think this interpretation misses some of what was genuinely new about *The Studio* and its agenda.
- 6 Harper stated that, although *The Magazine of Art* and *The Portfolio* used to show good work, by 1894, they were filled with photographs of paintings; especially old paintings because they weren't copyrighted. Charles Harper, *A Practical Handbook of Drawing for Modern Methods of Reproduction* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1894).
- 7 In the early 1890s, retouching costs ranged from one shilling and six pence per square inch for standard images to seven shillings and six pence per square inch for the retouching of paintings. The reproduction of the block itself cost one shilling and six pence per square inch. *British Printer* 4:24 (1891): 7. By 1896, a block that cost ten shillings to engrave might require retouching by hand costing 50 shillings. The elaborate hand engraving on a block in *Harper's* could cost £15. See W. Cheshire, "On the Touching of Half-tone Process Blocks," *Photographic Journal* N.S. 20:7 (1896): 181–186.
- 8 The photogravures were by the Berlin Photographic Company and by Goupil.
- 9 On the destabilizing effect of the introduction of photomechanical reproduction into art publishing, see Tom Gretton, "Signs for Labour-Value in Printed Pictures after the Photomechanical Revolution: Mainstream Changes and Extreme Cases Around 1900," *Oxford Art Journal* 28:3 (2005): 371–390. Gretton notes the conflicts in slightly later magazines such as *The Connoisseur* (1901–1992), which tried to add artistic value and status to photomechanical images through various strategies involving color printing, special paper stock, and finishing. These tactics attempted to combine the old with the new but, in Gretton's view, were unsuccessful. At this point, as he notes, *The Studio* also was engaging in similar tactics, including the use of tipped-in prints and blind-embossing.
- 10 *The Magazine of Art* cost one shilling and four pence.
- 11 "My Note Book," *The Art Amateur* 23: 3 (1890): 109. This piece testily records a piece in *The Boston Globe* that stated Gleeson White was now the editor of *The Art Amateur*. Montague Marks insisted that he was still the editor, but affirmed: "It is a pleasure to add that Mr. Gleeson White is Mr. Mark's valued associate." Simon Houfe describes *The Art Amateur* as "a low-priced, rather brash production filled with line blocks and half-tones" in his *Fin de Siècle* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1997), 54. It appears, on the contrary, to have been a well-informed and progressive magazine, albeit aimed at a middle-class audience.
- 12 "Some Art Books of the Year," *The Art Journal* NS 47(1895): 376.
- 13 He also was very active in photographic criticism. He wrote for *The Amateur Photographer* and *The Photogram*. In *The Photogram*, as in *The Studio*, he promoted the homoerotic work of Wilhelm von Gloeden. On his involvement with *The Photogram*, see "In Memory of Gleeson White," *The Photogram* 5 (1898): 371–374.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Although *The Studio* generally was critical of "academic art," the London art scene in the 1890s cannot be simplified into oppositions between the avant garde and the Academy. There were many connections between the arts and crafts movement, the aesthetic movement, and the Academy. On the complexity of the art scene, see Alan Staley, *The Post-Raphaelite Print: Etching, Illustration, Reproductive Engraving, and Photography in England in and around the 1860s* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995).
- 16 "Artists as Craftsmen No. 1 Sir Frederick Leighton, Bart, P. R. A., as a Modeller in Clay," *The Studio* I: 1 (1893): 27.
- 17 Ibid., 5–6.
- 18 For examples, see "An Interview with Charles F. Annesley Voysey, Architect and Designer," *The Studio* 1:6 (1893): 231–237; "Afternoons in Studios: A Chat with Mr. Whistler," *The Studio* 4: 21(1894): 116–121; and E. B. S., "A Chat with Mr. And Mrs. Nelson Dawson on Enamelling," *The Studio* 6:33 (1895): 173–178.

- 19 The lithograph appeared as a supplement to the May 1893 issue, after which there were no further supplements for that volume. The use of supplements and tipped-in prints was something that became more common in *The Studio* from its third volume, but for a while, the use of supplements remained an ad hoc, occasional promotional technique.
- 20 It was, it must be admitted, not a very good reproduction; the black areas were very mottled. This and two other Beardsley line and wash images were reproduced by a gelatin process which yielded poor results, compared to the line zino images. Beardsley, at first, had been unsure of the requirements of drawing for process reproduction, and in some images used a combination of wash and line that would have been very difficult to reproduce.
- 21 Frank Brangwyn, "Letters from Artists to Artists—Sketching Grounds. No. 1—Spain," *The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 12–14. The tone of this piece also is very much in a new, journalistic mode; taking the form of a chatty, anecdotal letter to a friend about a trip to Spain. This type of material continued to be used in the magazine.
- 22 Haldane Macfall, *Aubrey Beardsley: The Man and His Work* (London: John Lane, 1928).
- 23 Ibid., 36.
- 24 Joseph Pennell, "A New Illustrator: Aubrey Beardsley," *The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 14–18, quotation 15–17.
- 25 See Matthew Sturgis, *Aubrey Beardsley* (London: Harper Collins, 1999), 107–114, on the genesis of the *Morte d'Arthur* project.
- 26 Much of this was traced in *The Studio* itself. "The Editor's Room New Publications," *The Studio* 4 (1895): xix, noted that decorative books were surprisingly popular in an age of music halls, trains, impressionism, and capitalism. "The Editor's Room New Publications," *The Studio* 4 (1895): xxi, argued that decorative illustration had been creating a sensation with European artists. "The Arts and Crafts Exhibition," *The Studio* 9: 46 (1897): 262–285, suggested that the large number of books on display at the Exhibition demonstrated the popularity of decorative illustration.
- 27 Joseph Pennell, "A New Illustrator: Aubrey Beardsley," *The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 14–18, quotation 18.
- 28 "The Lay Figure at Home," *The Studio* 3 (1894): xxii. In 1895, Charles Hiatt noted Beardsley's immediate influence on Will Bradley in the U.S., and on illustrators in England. Charles Hiatt, *Picture Posters; A Short History of the Illustrated Placard* (London: Bell, 1895); Paul Greenhalgh, *Art Nouveau 1890–1914* (London: V&A Publications, 2000), 24. Also see Houfe, *Fin de Siècle* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1997): 79–81 on the rapid international spread of Beardsley's influence.
- 29 Gleeson White contributed a monthly column "The Lay Figure Speaks," later retitled "The Lay Figure at Home," that dealt with current art topics in short paragraphs. The column invariably commented on illustration and reproduction. A selection of other important articles from the early volumes include: "Drawing for Reproduction: Outline Work and Tint Boards," *The Studio* 1:2 (1893): 65–72; Charles Harper, "Drawing for Reproduction by Process: Lithographic Chalk on Various Papers," *The Studio* 2:9 (1893): 99–100; "New Publications," *The Studio* 2:10 (1894): 143–146, which is a criticism of the use of wood engravings in G. H. Boughton's *Rip Van Winkle* illustrations, "Some Recent Volumes on the Printed Book and Its Decoration," *The Studio* 2:10 (1894): 140–142; "Afternoons in Studios: A Chat with Mr. G. H. Boughton, ARA," *The Studio* 3: 17 (1894): 131–136; Joseph Gleeson White, "Decorative Illustration, with Especial Reference to the Work of Mr. Paton Wilson," *The Studio* 3:18 (1894): 182–184; review of Henry Blackburn's *The Art of Illustration* in "The Editor's Room: New Publications," *The Studio* 3 (1894): xxxiv; and J. M. Bullock, "Charles Dana Gibson," *The Studio* 8:40 (1896): 75–80. It also is worth noting that many of *The Studio's* competitions, which were a popular feature of the magazine in its first decade, were for drawings reproduced by photomechanical process. On the competitions see Barbara Morris, "The Studio Prize Competitions: The Early Years 1893–1900" in "High Life and Low Life: The Studio and the Fin de Siècle," *Studio International* 201:1022/1023 (1993): 80–84.
- 30 See "Reviews of Recent Publications," *The Studio* 6:34 (1896): 258, on Lucien Pissaro's *The Queen of the Fishes*. On wood engraving as an expressive art form rather than a reproduction method, see "Reviews of Recent Publications," *The Studio* 14:63 (1898): 10–16, review of A. L. Baldry, *The Future of Wood Engraving*; Gabriel Mourey, "Auguste Lepère, A French Wood Engraver," *The Studio* 12:57 (1897): 143–155; and Joseph Gleeson White, "The Coloured Prints of Mr. W. P. Nicholson," *Studio* 12: 57 (1897): 177–183.
- 31 Joseph Gleeson White, "Photographic Portraiture: An Interview with Mr. H. H. Hay Cameron," *The Studio* 2:8 (1893): 84–89, quotation 89.
- 32 Joseph Gleeson White, "The National Competition: South Kensington," *The Studio* 8:42 (1896): 224–237, quotation 224.
- 33 "The Work of Miss Ethel Reed," *The Studio* 10:50 (1897): 230–236.
- 34 Trevor Fawcett suggests that the opportunities that cheaper reproduction and printing opened up led to a "visual anarchy" in most of the art magazines of the time. Across Europe, from *Jegend to The Studio*, to *The Connoisseur*, they became "overfilled with disparate illustrations, graphic and photographic, coloured and plain, originals and reproductions." Trevor Fawcett and Clive Phillpot, *The Art Press: Two Centuries of Art Magazines* (London: The Art Book Company, 1976): 57.
- 35 An example of this approach is an article on W. Dendy Sadler's sentimental "Georgian" genre pictures of monks and coaching inns. This is one of the first occasions on which *The Magazine of Art* featured a full-page reproduction of a painting by halftone rather than wood engraving: "The Widow's Birthday" facing page 267. But the magazine also illustrated the article with a full-page wood engraving of "A Hunting Morn" facing page 268. To add to the variety, "The Top of the Hill" facing page 272 is an etching printed on thicker stock. *The Magazine of Art* (1896): 265–273.
- 36 There are four wall paintings reproduced in Volume 1, and only three paintings reproduced in Volume 2.

- 37 These projects were more adventurous than *The Studio*. One of his major achievements was *The Pageant*, a beautifully illustrated and designed book that was published as an annual in 1896 and 1897. Contributors included Verlaine, Beerbohm, Whistler, Millais, Watts, Burne Jones, Housman, and Shannon. *The Magazine of Art* described it as “a genuine delight to those who take a vivid interest in the most modern manifestations of art and literature.” *The Magazine of Art* 20 (Nov. 1896–April 1897): 341. Gleeson White had been very involved with key members of *fin de siècle* homosexual culture from early in the decade including Charles Kains Jackson, Henry Scott Tuke, and Frederick Rolfe. On the homosexual content of *The Pageant*, see Laurel Brake, “Gay Discourse” and “The Artist and Journal of Home Culture” in *Nineteenth Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, Laurel Brake, et al., eds. (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave, 2000), 271–291. In 1898 on a long-planned trip to Italy with members of the Art Workers’ Guild, Gleeson White caught typhoid. A couple of weeks after his return to London, he died on October 19 at the age of 47. His activities as a writer, editor, designer, and publisher had not been financially rewarding; the profits from the sale of his bookshop had dwindled, and his estate yielded only a few thousand pounds. His friends got together to contribute to a fund to support his widow and children. A glowing eulogy in *The Studio* praised him as hugely knowledgeable, energetic, and influential on an international scale. “His death not only removes a man of conspicuous importance in artistic circles, but deprives numerous branches of aesthetic energy of their controlling spirit and their active leader,” “The Late Mr. Gleeson White,” *The Studio* 15:68 (1898): 141.
- 38 The Index to the first twenty-one volumes listed monographs on two architects, nineteen illustrators and printmakers, fifteen designers, and eighty-four painters and sculptors. The painters began to dominate from volume 7 onwards. *The Studio* included two women painters in its lead articles on individual artists: Evelyn De Morgan and Marianne Stokes. Walter Shaw Sparrow, “The Art of Mrs. William De Morgan,” *The Studio* 19:86 (1900): 221–232 and Harriet Ford, “The Work of Mrs. Adrian Stokes,” *The Studio* 19: 85 (1900): 149–156. An earlier piece on Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes showed her in her studio and also painting outdoors. E.B.S., “The Paintings and Etchings of Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes,” *The Studio* 4:249 (1895): 186–192. Luise Hagen, “Lady Artists in Germany,” *The Studio* 13:60 (1898): 91–99, notes the prejudice against women artists in Germany, and records work by Bertha Wegmann and Jenna Bauck. Women were featured more often as designers and illustrators than as painters. Examples include: “The Work of Miss Ethel Reed,” *Studio* 10: 50 (1897): 230–236; E. B. S., “Eleanor F. Brickdale, Designer and Illustrator,” *The Studio* 13:60 (1898): 103–08; and Walter Shaw Sparrow, “Some Drawings by Mrs. Farmiloe,” *The Studio* 18:81 (1899): 172–179. Women were particularly well represented in the discussions and surveys of decorative design. Gleeson White’s article on The National Competition South Kensington illustrated twelve pieces by women students and five by men. Gleeson White, “The National Competition South Kensington, 1895,” *The Studio* 6:31 (1895): 42–50. On the complexities of gender roles in the arts and crafts movement, see Anthea Callen, “Sexual Divisions of Labour in the Arts and Crafts Movement,” 151–164, and also Lynne Walker, “The Arts and Crafts Alternative,” 165–173, in *A View from the Interior Women and Design*, Judy Attfield and Pat Kirkham, eds. (London: The Women’s Press, 1995).
- 39 “The Editor’s Room New Publications,” *The Studio* 4 (1895): xvii. Not only are the sentiments very much in line with Gleeson White’s, the piece was a review of a book Pennell, with whom Gleeson White worked closely on a number of publishing projects.
- 40 Charles Hiatt, “The Collecting of Posters: A New Field for Connoisseurs,” *The Studio* 1:1 (1893): 61–64. W. S. Rogers in *The Book of the Poster* (London: Greening and Co., 1901) claimed that Gleeson White was, in fact, the author of the article, and noted the importance of *The Studio* in focusing attention on posters. Rogers recorded Gleeson White’s involvement in the first English poster exhibitions at the Royal Aquarium in 1895 and 1896. Gleeson White also lectured on posters in a series of talks at the Bolt Court School in 1896, which featured the key figures in contemporary printing and illustration: William Morris, Joseph Pennell, T. R. Way, Cobden Sanderson, and Emery Walker.

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